

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

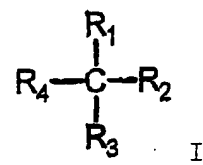
This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

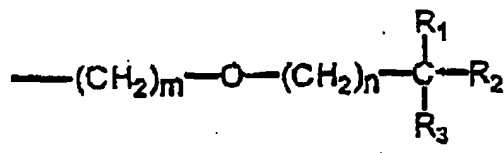
1-34. (canceled)

35. (currently amended) A process for coating cheeses, wherein a coating composition is applied onto whole cheeses or portions of cheese, ~~which~~ wherein said coating composition comprises from 60% to 100% by weight of a product of esterification of at least one fatty acid and at least one polyol containing a branched chain having at least 5 carbon atoms and at least 2 OH groups, and

wherein the polyol containing a branched chain corresponds to the general formula:



in which R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄, which may be identical or different, are selected from a C₁-C₆ alkyl group or a C₁-C₆ hydroxyalkyl group; or R₄ represents a group



m and n, which are identical or different, being an integer from 1 to 6, R₁, R₂ and R₃ being as defined above, provided that at least two from R₁ to R₄ are a C₁-C₆ hydroxyalkyl group.

36. (canceled).

37. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 35, wherein the polyol containing a branched chain comprises a neopentyl group.

38. (canceled)

39. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 35, wherein the polyol is selected from pentaerythritol, neopentyl glycol, trimethylolethane, trimethylolpropane and dipentaerythritol.

40. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 35, wherein the fatty acids consist of at least one first fatty acid of a group (A) and at least one fatty acid of a second group (B), the group (A) having a melting range at least 40°C higher than that of the group (B).

41. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 35, wherein the fatty acids (A) are saturated or unsaturated fatty acids having more than 12 carbon atoms.

42. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 41, wherein the fatty acids (A) are selected from hydrogenated palm and rapeseed fatty acids.

43. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 40, wherein the fatty acids (B) are saturated or unsaturated fatty acids having from 1 to 12 carbon atoms.

44. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 43, wherein the fatty acids (B) are selected from hydrogenated copra fatty acids, octanoic acid, decanoic acid and mixtures thereof.

45. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 44, wherein the fatty acids (A) are present at 50 to 100% by weight relative to the total weight of the fatty acids, and the fatty acids (B) are present at 0 to 50% by weight relative to the total weight of the fatty acids.

46. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 40, wherein the B/A molar ratio is between 0.8 and 1.5.

47. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 35, wherein the coating comprises at least one polycarboxylic acid esterified with the polyol via one or two of its carboxylic functions.

48. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 47, wherein the dicarboxylic acid is selected from sebacic acid, adipic acid, succinic acid, malic acid and oxalic acid, in a proportion of between 0 and 20% by weight, relative to the total weight of the coating.

49. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 35, wherein the alcohol function to acid function ratio is greater than 1, and advantageously between 1 and 2.

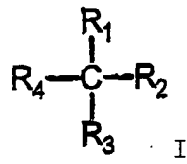
50. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 47, wherein the coating composition comprises from 0 to 20% by weight of polycarboxylic, in particular dicarboxylic, acid relative to the total weight of the coating composition.

51. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 35, wherein the coating composition contains a plasticizer compatible with foodstuffs.

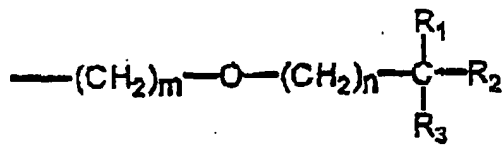
52. (currently amended) A coating composition for cheeses, comprising from 60 to 100% by weight of the product of esterification of a polyol containing a branched chain having at least 5 carbon atoms and at least 2 OH groups and

- of at least one fatty acid of a first group (A), and
 - of at least one fatty acid of a second group (B),
- these fatty acids of the group (A) having a melting range at least 40°C higher than that of the fatty acids of the group (B),
and

wherein the polyol containing a branched chain corresponds to the general formula:



in which R_1 , R_2 , R_3 and R_4 , which are identical or different, are selected from a C_1 - C_6 alkyl group or a C_1 - C_6 hydroxyalkyl group; or R_4 represents a group



m and n , which are identical or different, being an integer from 1 to 6, R_1 , R_2 and R_3 being as defined above, provided that at least two of R_1 to R_4 are a C_1 - C_6 hydroxyalkyl group.

53. (canceled)

54. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 52, wherein the polyol containing a branched chain comprises a neopentyl group.

55. (canceled)

56. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 52, wherein the polyol is selected from pentaerythritol, neopentyl glycol, trimethylolethane, trimethylolpropane and dipentaerythritol.

57. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 52, wherein the fatty acids (A) are saturated or unsaturated fatty acids having more than 12 carbon atoms.

58. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 57, wherein the fatty acids (A) are selected from hydrogenated palm and rapeseed fatty acids.

59. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 52, wherein the acids (B) are saturated or unsaturated acids having from 1 to 12 carbon atoms.

60. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 59, wherein the acids (B) are selected from hydrogenated copra fatty acids, octanoic acid, decanoic acid and mixtures thereof.

61. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 52, wherein (A) is present at from 50 to 75% by weight relative to the total weight of the fatty acids and (B) is present at 50 to 100% by weight relative to the total weight of the fatty acids.

62. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 52, wherein the B/A molar ratio is between 0.8 and 1.5, preferably between 1 and 1.3.

63. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 52, wherein it also comprises from 0 to 20%, by weight of a polycarboxylic acid, in particular a dicarboxylic acid, the

dicarboxylic acid being present in free form and/or in a form esterified with the polyol.

64. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 52, wherein the number of alcohol functions/number of acid functions ratio is greater than 1, advantageously between 1 and 2.

65. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 52, wherein it also comprises from 0 to 20%, advantageously from 3 to 10%, by weight of a plasticizer compatible with foodstuffs.

66. (previously presented) A process for preparing a coating composition as claimed in claim 52, wherein an esterification reaction is carried out between at least one polyol with at least one fatty acid of a first group (A) and at least one acid of a second group (B).

67. (previously presented) A coated cheese comprising a coating obtained according to the process of claim 35.

68. (previously presented) The process according to claim 51, wherein said plasticizer is a copolymer of butyl acrylate or butyl methacrylate and of ethylene, or a copolymer of vinyl acetate and of ethylene acetate.

69. (previously presented) The process according to claim 66, wherein a plasticizer is present and said plasticizer is a copolymer of butyl acrylate or butyl methacrylate and of

ethylene, or a copolymer of vinyl acetate and of ethylene acetate.

70. (previously presented) The process according to claim 66, wherein the acid is selected from the group consisting of polycarboxylic acid and dicarboxylic acid.